

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Final Summary Notes
Douglas Police Department, Douglas, Arizona
January 21, 1999

Introduction

Meeting was called to order by Bill Van Pelt, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) at 9 a.m. All in attendance introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

A. Opening comments and ground rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. One person speaking at a time, with no side conversations. This allows each person to be heard and keeps the meeting moving through the agenda. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment and are encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the JAGCT meeting.

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

No changes were suggested for the agenda.

C. Discussion of summary notes from JAGCT meeting on July 30, 1998

No additional comments on the July 30, 1998 summary notes were provided.

D. Task Reports:

1. Update on AZ-NM sightings - Mike Pruss and Greg Schmitt

No verified sightings were documented since the last meeting in AZ. Five jaguar sighting reports have been received by the Department. All reports were received several weeks after the sightings and were not verifiable.

No verified sightings were documented in NM since the last meeting.

2. Kill Verification Activities (Section 5.H.2.) – Warner Glenn

Jack Childs and Wendy Glenn reported that no jaguar depredations were reported or investigated by the subcommittee. Wendy reported that all hunts conducted by Warner from livestock kills resulted in treeing a lion.

Jack Childs reported that his book on track verification of borderland cats “Tracking the Felids of the Borderlands” is available from the Phoenix Zoo gift shop or directly from him in Tucson. His address and phone number are Jack Childs, 4069 W. Valencia Rd., Tucson, AZ 85746, (520) 883-4029. The price of the book is \$16.50 plus tax and \$3.50 for shipping. Books and ordering flyers were available at the meeting, and Jack sold and signed numerous copies.

The Depredation Subcommittee had no meetings since our last JAGCT meeting.

Bill Van Pelt suggested that the team pursue development of an Operational Capture Plan that would establish the process protocol for activities leading up to the Jaguar Handling Protocol and the pursuit of a jaguar. Bill suggested that the Depredation Subcommittee work with the Phoenix Zoo to develop this document. Wendy agreed to work on this. Bill agreed to provide Wendy with a copy of the Department's USFWS permit.

Bill informed the group that he would check on the current status of the Department's Endangered Species Permit. The permit is currently being reviewed by USFWS office in Albuquerque and is to be finalized in the near future. However, the Department's endangered species activities are still covered under its existing permit until the new one is in place.

3. Habitat Identification (Section 5.A.) – Mike Pruss

The Habitat Subcommittee met on September 22, 1998 at the Gray Ranch. The meeting was well attended. The group discussed several issues, including the Draft Habitat Criteria and the name and use of the map the committee is developing [the mapped area will be called the "Jaguar Study and Voluntary Cooperative Effort Area"].

Some changes to the Habitat Criteria were made based on comments from SAG members. The criterion for elevation was eliminated because it was determined that it was redundant with habitat types. Water availability was added to the list of habitat criteria. The importance of seasonal and annual water availability was discussed.

The Habitat Subcommittee met following the JAGCT meeting at 1pm to discuss the details of comments received, new documents that have been received, evaluate the progress and direction of the mapping effort, and make additional data gathering assignments.

4. JAGSAG Review Response (Section 6.A.) – Bill Van Pelt

Habitat subcommittee products and Raul Valdez' draft reports were forwarded to the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) for review. Comments were received from Alan Rabinowitz and Raul Valdez. Raul did not feel it was appropriate to comment on the reports submitted by him but he did comment on the Habitat Criteria. Raul recommended evaluating the condition of the riparian area and prioritize them for jaguar conservation. Raul will finalize the reports based on comments from the SAG and will distribute the final reports to the team.

Alan Rabinowitz recommended eliminating elevation from the Draft Jaguar Habitat Criteria sheet and adding stable water sources to the criteria sheet. Alan also recommended reviewing and citing more scientific papers on jaguar ecology.

Alan's comments on the reports were minor. Although the reports identify potential areas from which jaguars are coming, it does not tell us any new information. We already knew jaguars were coming up from Mexico. The question we need to answer is where is the breeding population and what is happening to them once they arrive in the borderlands. The fact that there exists some habitat, which may or may not be suitable for some jaguar residents in the US is moot at this point.

A discussion on the pros and cons of collaring a jaguar followed, including comments that Alan Rabinowitz was now a proponent of collaring a jaguar to gather more information on their habitat use in the borderlands area.

5. Increasing Legal Protection in New Mexico (Section 7.A. and B.) – Greg Schmitt

Legislation has been proposed in the current 60-day legislative session to increase the legal protection for jaguars in New Mexico. The legislation is presumably similar to Arizona's, but information on the details of the legislation was not available. On February 18, the Jaguar Protection Act passed the New Mexican Senate Conservation and Judiciary Committees.

Comments regarding support from the agricultural community were discussed in regards to whether the proposed legislation included a caveat for de-listing, and whether double jeopardy (State and Federal laws) would be an issue.

6. Education (Section 6.B.) – Sue Krentz and Karen Husted

Bill discussed the process and timeline of review for the Education Subcommittee's draft and final products.

Sue presented a report on the work and status of the subcommittee.

Karen Husted presented information on the Lesson Plan Model and what areas have the most and least progress. The most information has been gathered on Cultural aspects of the Jaguar Conservation Team and jaguars, and the weakest area of the model was in the Economics area.

The subcommittee has addressed most of the standards that a teacher would use in a lesson plan. Comments were made that there is actually too much information in some areas and that it actually needs to be pared down somewhat. Karen Schedler (AGFD) suggested limiting either the target age group or scope of the jaguar unit.

Karen Husted suggested implementing the model on a pilot basis in 5 schools in AZ and 5 in NM. To do this, ½ day of teacher in-service training would be necessary. Resources would be an issue for implementation, and it was estimated that the cost of in-servicing teachers would be \$5-10,000, and that purchasing books and materials, and securing copyright releases and approvals would cost additional money. Possible funding opportunities were discussed, including Heritage Fund Grants.

There was some discussion of what the central focus of the model should be, the JAGCT, Jaguar Conservation, Biodiversity as it related to the jaguar, or the Jaguar. Also discussed was whether the biological or political aspects of jaguars were more important or interesting to students. The JAGWG voted not to switch direction mid-stream and to maintain the current focus of the model, which is the JAGCT.

Karen Husted agreed to provide a two to five page summary of the educational materials within 30 days to Terry Johnson. Sue and Michael Robinson agreed to develop a biodiversity section for the education committee.

Lee Benson asked if informational brochures, posters, or other informational materials were in the works as part of the educational component of the JAGCT. Karen (AGFD) agreed to investigate whether AGFD I&E can produce a public information brochure. Lee agreed to assist on brochure/poster work, but added that he did not have time to head a subcommittee.

7. End of the Year Report (Section 8.A.) – Bill Van Pelt

Bill informed the group that there had been problems with the printing of the report, and that the current plan was to draft a 1½-year report to include activities completed up to this date. The report will not be significantly different than the draft that had been circulated earlier, just more up to date.

E. Other Business

1. Raul's Report –work conducted by students under Raul's supervision indicates that there is a jaguar population in Mexico ca. 100 miles south of the U.S./Mexico border. The population seems to occur in the oak uplands in the area of Sierra Huasabas and in the Sinaloan lowlands. Since 1990, six jaguars have been killed due to livestock depredations.
2. Dave Brown and Carlos Lopez Gonzalez surveys – Their survey work indicated that there are 3 core areas of jaguar populations in Sonora, Mexico. The closest being 135 miles from the United States border. They acquired evidence of 22 jaguar kills since 1989, including 6 females, of which three were lactating. Jaguars seem to use montane areas more than riparian areas. There was some discussion among the JAGWG on whether the riparian areas may be more disturbed by humans than the upland areas.
3. Raul Valdez has submitted a Heritage Grant proposal to the AGFD to conduct jaguar surveys in the borderland area.
4. Terry Johnson has been invited to present information on the JAGCT to the Wildlife Conservation Society meeting in Mexico City, March 1-5, 1999. One of the proposed products of the workshop is a current distribution map for jaguars.

5. The USFWS has not worked on identifying a Recovery Team for the jaguar, or begun to draft a Recovery Plan for the species.
6. It is unknown what the effects of the recent fires and drought are having on the jaguar in Mexico.
7. Jack Childs introduced George Drennen, a former forensics photographer from Texas who demonstrated a photographic scale that would be useful in a larger format for documenting jaguar sign. The smaller plastic version that is currently available from the manufacturer costs \$4.95, but is probably too small for our use with large tracks. A similar version could be designed and printed on cardboard stock for approximately \$0.35/apiece. This was recommended for inclusion in future copies of Jack's book, and to be included in any field verification kits that might be distributed to field personnel.
8. The next meeting was scheduled for July 15, 1999 at the Animas Community Center in Animas, NM at 10:00am New Mexico time.

F. Close Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Attendance Roster

Jack Childs	Depredation Subcommittee
Gabriel Paz	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Mike Pruss	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Gary Helbing	U.S. Forest Service
Wendy Glenn	Rancher/Malpai Borderlands Group
Don Cullum	Rancher
Judy Keeler	Boothel Heritage Association
Diego Villalba	New Mexico State Land Office
Meira Gault	Rancher
Stephen Williams	Arizona State Land Department
Karen Kay Husted	Rancher/educator
Brandon Jones	New Mexico Wildlife Services
Cordy Cowen	Rancher
Steve Pavlik	Native American Historical Researcher
Sarah Rinkevich	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Albuquerque, New Mexico
Karen Schedler	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Ben Brown	Gray Ranch
Merle Baho	White Mountain Apache Tribe
Bill Van Pelt	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Paul Pirtle	Depredation Committee
Levi Klump	Rancher
Jay Dusard	Photographer
Nina King	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Stephanie Coleman	Rancher/ASU
Mary Ann Rinkevich	Private citizen
Ken Hulick	The Nature Conservancy/University of Arizona
Kim Bartlein	Fort Huachuca
Harry R. Woodward	Arizona Wildlife Federation
Jason Swartz	Private citizen
Greg Schmitt	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Bill Moore	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
Chuck Hayes	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Patrick Snyder	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Anthony Monfredi	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Bruce Palmer	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Phoenix, Arizona
Nina King	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-San Bernardino NWR
Sue Krentz	Rancher/Education Subcommittee Chair
Jerry Pratt	Arizona Wildlife Federation
Lee Benson	National Park Service
Douglas Hardy	U.S. Forest Service
George B. Drennan	Photographer
Michael Robinson	Southwest Center for Biological Diversity
Pete Miller	Private citizen

Jaguar Conservation Team

March 1, 1999

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Barbara Miller

Private citizen

Bill Merhege

Bureau of Land Management-Las Cruces, New Mexico

Ruth Cowan

Rancher

Jim Gacey

Bureau of Land Management-Safford, Arizona